

Department of Health and Family Services
Answers to Some Common Autism Questions

- Q. I received a letter from my autism provider. The letter suggested that my child could receive “personal care aide” services to supplement the behavioral intervention services available to my child under the autism waiver. Can you tell me more about this service?**
- A.** Medicaid does not use the term “personal care aide,” so it is not clear what particular types of services your provider is discussing. However, Medicaid does use the term “personal care services.” These services are very different from the behavioral intervention services available under the autism waiver. Generally, personal care services include a range of assistance provided to persons with disabilities to enable them to accomplish tasks they would normally do for themselves if they did not have a disability. Such assistance most often relates to performance of activities of daily living, such as eating, bathing, dressing and undressing, toileting, assistance with mobility including transfers and ambulation, and personal hygiene. There are particular Medicaid coverage requirements for personal care services. Each situation is reviewed individually through prior authorization. Services may or may not be authorized depending upon the needs of the individual and the coverage requirements for these services.

In Wisconsin personal care services are provided by licensed home health agencies, counties, or Independent Living Centers. For further information about Wisconsin Medicaid’s personal care benefit please review the providers’ Personal Care Handbook at:
www.dhfs.state.wi.us/medicaid/updates/provtype/86perscare.htm#medicaid

- Q. The letter that I received from my autism provider also suggested that my child could receive services under the “Severely Emotionally Disturbed” program to supplement the behavioral intervention services available to my child under the autism waiver. Can you tell me more about this service?**
- A.** There is no “Severely Emotionally Disturbed” program under Wisconsin Medicaid. What is perhaps being discussed in the letter is intensive in-home treatment for children with severe emotional disturbance (SED), which is available through the Medicaid card. This service is not identical to behavioral intervention services for children with autism. Intensive in-home treatment is a combination of individual and family treatment modalities based on the in-home treatment plan. The provider must justify providing services in the home rather than in a clinic setting.

There are particular Medicaid coverage requirements for intensive in-home treatment for children with SED. For example, to qualify for this service a child generally must be receiving services from two or more service systems, including mental health, social services, child protective services, juvenile justice and special education. Each situation is reviewed individually through prior authorization. Services may or may not be authorized depending upon the needs of the individual and the coverage requirements for these services.

Q. My child has had three years of intensive in-home autism services, what happens to our services under the waiver?

- A.** The level of funding after a child has had three years of services is reduced to an average of \$28.00 per day. Families will have many options for the types of services and supports they need under the waiver. Some families want to continue the discrete trial or applied behavioral analysis (ABA) therapies. This will be possible under a service called counseling and therapeutic resources under the waiver. A final draft of the description of this service is attached. The amount of funding available will mean that families would be able to get seven to eight hours per week of this type of therapeutic intervention.

Families also have options from a variety of other services under the waiver. These include services such as habilitation day services which can include specialized child care and after school care, communication aides, respite care, consumer education training (which included family education and training), family directed services and supports, daily living skills, supported employment and supportive home care. A description of each waiver service is attached.

Services will be developed through a discussion with a support and service coordinator and will be based upon the outcomes that the family has identified for their child and the services that will help the child to achieve those outcomes. The agreed upon services are then noted on the child's individual service plan and the provider of the service is identified.

We do not anticipate significant changes on waiver details, however this information is not final until we receive federal Medicaid approval.